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ABSTRACT

This article comments on the use of radio, television, films, newspaper, and other printed materials to supplement existing programs and textbooks. Specific references to television networks and newspapers illustrate the type of cultural material suggested for classroom use. (RL)

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NEWS MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF GERMAN CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

by John Michalski, Leeward Community College

Most instructors are by now convinced of the necessity of introducing culture into classroom. Without getting involved in the hair-splitting arguments regarding the boundaries of culture and civilization, it is possible to conclude that the news media do constitute a relevant and readily accessible source of information concerning the cultural activities of a country. These news media normally include the radio, television, films, newspapers and other printed materials.

How much? And how often? And should the presentation be all in German or English? Questions of this sort will, in the final analysis, depend upon an instructor's stated course goals and objectives and the type of committment he has made toward a given teaching methodology.

From a practical point of view, an instructor with a short - wave radio can tune in on a great variety of English and German programs beamed by the Deutsche Welle". Free program notes are available in both English and German, describing them with a listing of the appropriate wave length frequencies and times of transmission. (Deutsche Welle, 5 Cologne, P.O.B. 10-04-44)

An exchange of television programs goes on regularly between the West German network and the National Educational Television Network. Some of these programs are transmitted in the U.S. with English commentaries. For the internationally minded instructor and student NET produces a weekly program called "World Press in Review" moderated by Roger Boas. One portion of that program deals with the German Press. A Close working relationship between a school system and its NET outlets can bring about the televising of many useful programs.

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When it comes to films, both English and German, an instructor can draw upon a great number of sources. He can choose from the offerings of the numerous U.S. commercial and educational film producers and distributors to* the German, Austrian and Swiss counsulates which have lending libraries of varying sizes.

Most educational libraries, and to some extent some public libraries, contain a wealth of printed materials in English and German. Inter Nationes, which considers itself "A German association for the promotion of international relations" (91-103 Kennedyallee, D-53 Bonn/ Bad Godesberg) publishes a monthly brochure, available free of charge, entitled "Cultural News from Germany". Instructors and students can keep abreast of current cultural events in music, opera, ballet, fine arts, literature, theater, photography, film, research, university life, religious affairs and education. It also usually contains a chrono--logical preview of festivals, competitions, exhibitions and conferences.

The "Bulletin", a weekly survey of German Affairs, issued by the Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government, contains predominantly political information. It is obtainable free of charge from the German Information Center, 410 Park, Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Another source of information is "The German Tribune," a weekly review of the German press in English. The articles contained in it are complete translations of the original texts taken from such leading German newspapers as Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Die Welt, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Münchner Merkur, Rhein - Neckar Zeitung, Handelsblatt and many others. (The German Tribune, 2 Hamburg, 22, Schöne Aussicht 23, distributed in the U.S. by: Mass Mailings Inc. 540 West 24th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.)

The materials derived from the various news media should be integrated into the existing programs and text books. The selection will normally reflect an instructor's own personal preferences and should be based on such criteria as relevance, importance, timeliness and the students' ability to comprehend and assimilate. The cultural information derived from the news media may not always constitute the most significant aspect of a total national culture, but it does usually represent a vital, timely and relevant element of contemporary German culture.